AZOZOE

KAZUMASA TAKAYAMA

DARK HORSE COMICS®

Manga

CHRONOWAR
2 OF 9

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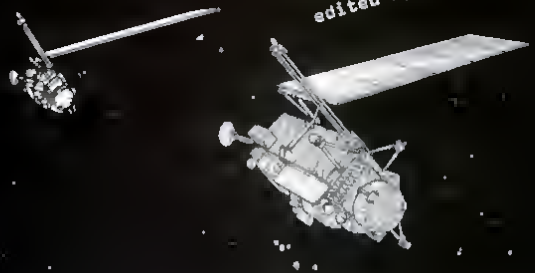

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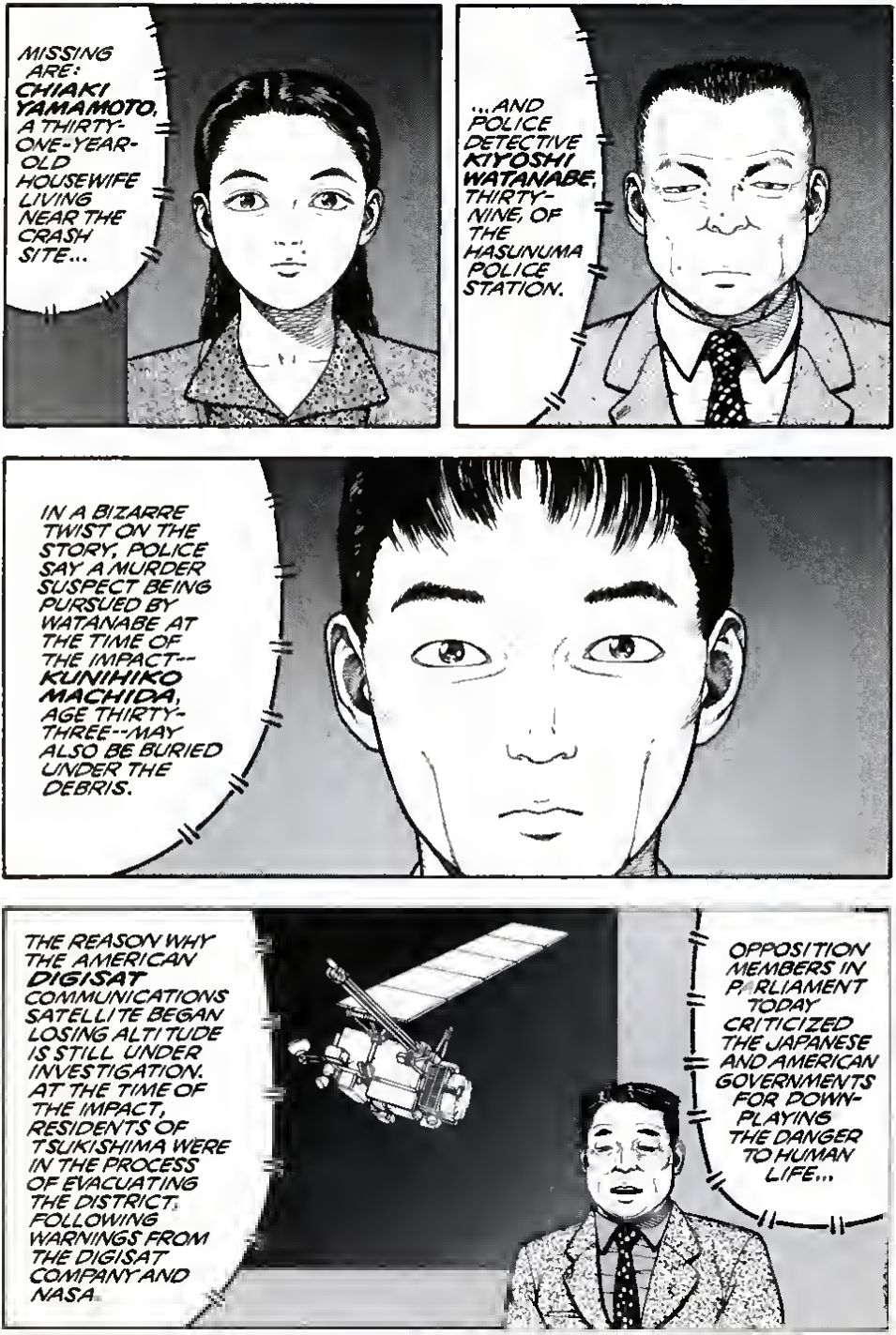
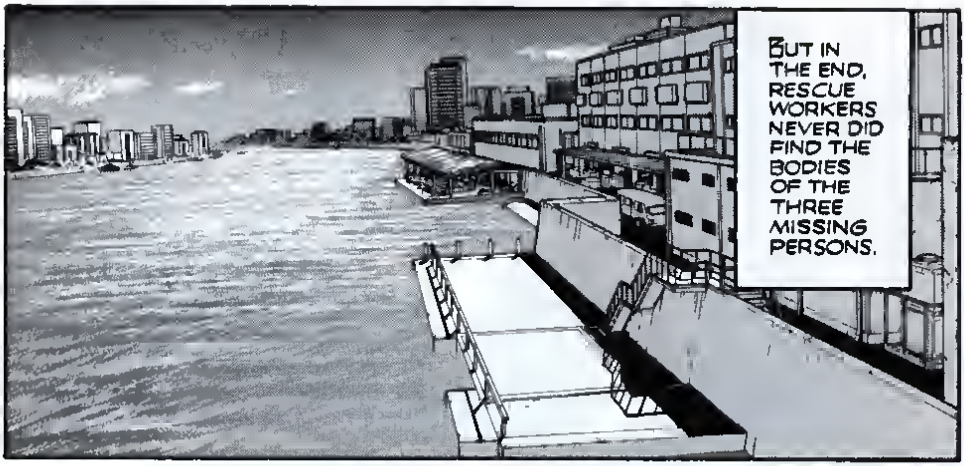
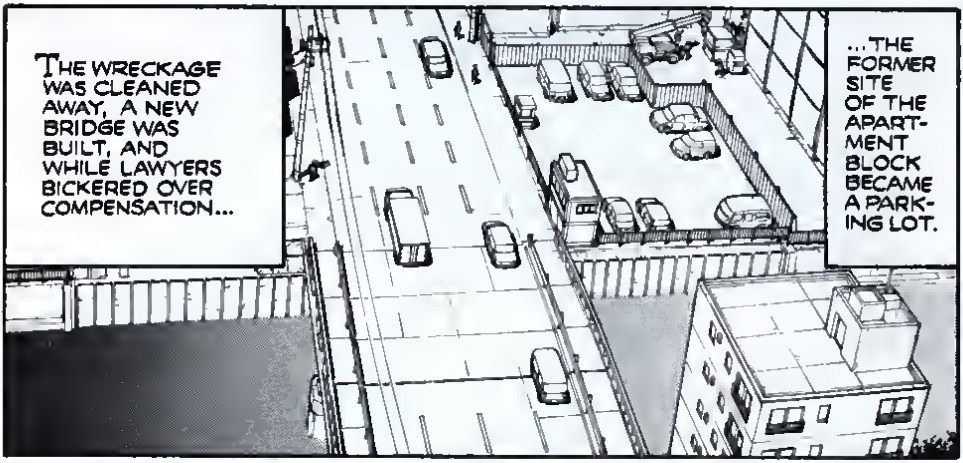
LAST NIGHT AT APPROXIMATELY NINE-THIRTY P.M., A TELECOMMUNICATIONS SATELLITE CRASHED INTO CENTRAL TOKYO'S RESIDENTIAL TSUKISHIMA DISTRICT. THE ORBIT OF THE TWO-TON SATELLITE BEGAN TO UNEXPECTEDLY DECAY ABOUT TWENTY-FOUR HOURS AGO.

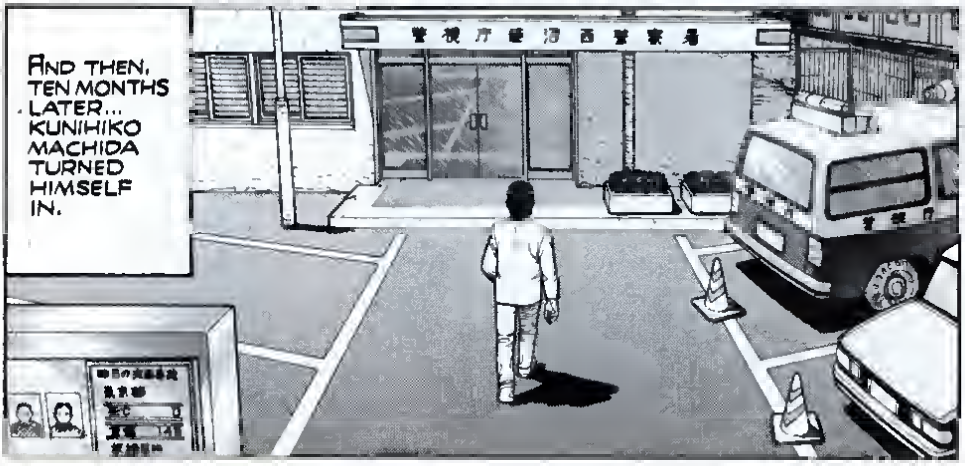
THE MAIN BODY OF THE SATELLITE STRUCK A TEN-STORY APARTMENT BUILDING, TOTALLY DESTROYING IT. THREE RESIDENTS WERE KILLED WHEN THE STRUCTURE COLLAPSED.

IN ADDITION, ANOTHER THREE PEOPLE ARE REPORTED MISSING.
RESCUE WORKERS SAY THEY WILL NOT BE SURE OF THEIR FATE UNTIL ALL THE RUBBLE HAS BEEN CLEARED.

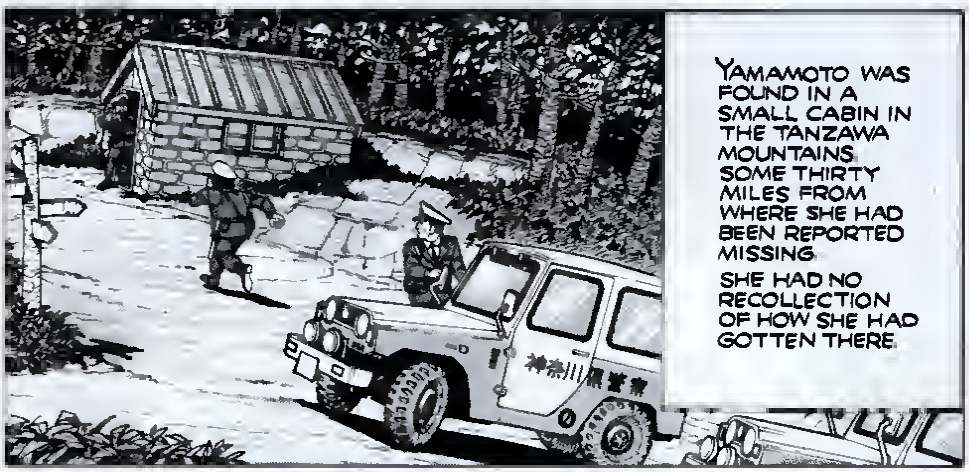

MISSING ARE: CHIAKI YAMAMOTO, A THIRTY-ONE-YEAR-OLD HOUSEWIFE LIVING NEAR THE CRASH SITE...
...AND POLICE DETECTIVE KIYOSHI WATANABE, THIRTY-NINE, OF THE HASUNUMA POLICE STATION.
IN A BIZARRE TWIST ON THE STORY, POLICE SAY A MURDER SUSPECT BEING PURSUED BY WATANABE AT THE TIME OF THE IMPACT-- KUNIHIKO MACHIDA, AGE THIRTY-THREE--MAY ALSO BE BURIED UNDER THE DEBRIS.
THE REASON WHY THE AMERICAN DIGISAT COMMUNICATIONS SATELLITE BEGAN LOSING ALTITUDE IS STILL UNDER INVESTIGATION. AT THE TIME OF THE IMPACT, RESIDENTS OF TSUKISHIMA WERE IN THE PROCESS OF EVACUATING THE DISTRICT, FOLLOWING WARNINGS FROM THE DIGISAT COMPANY AND NASA.
OPPOSITION MEMBERS IN PARLIAMENT TODAY CRITICIZED THE JAPANESE AND AMERICAN GOVERNMENTS FOR DOWN-PLAYING THE DANGER TO HUMAN LIFE...

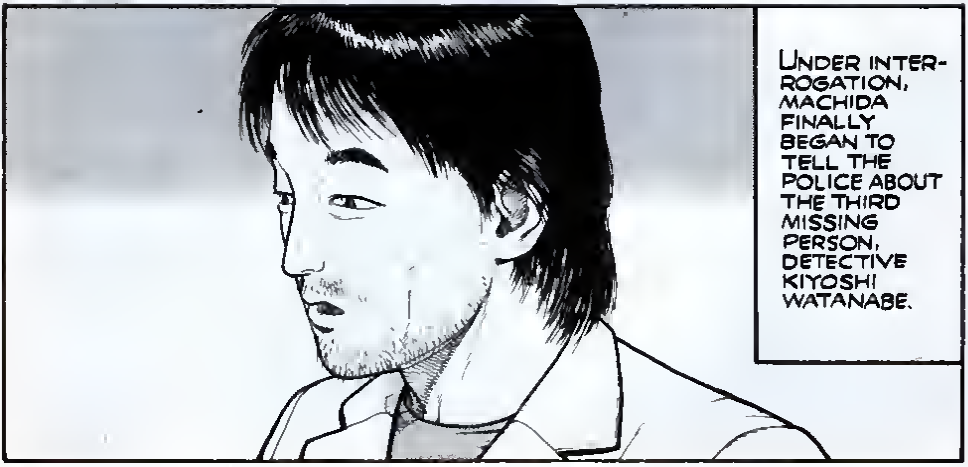

BUT IN THE END, RESCUE WORKERS NEVER DID FIND THE BODIES OF THE THREE MISSING PERSONS.

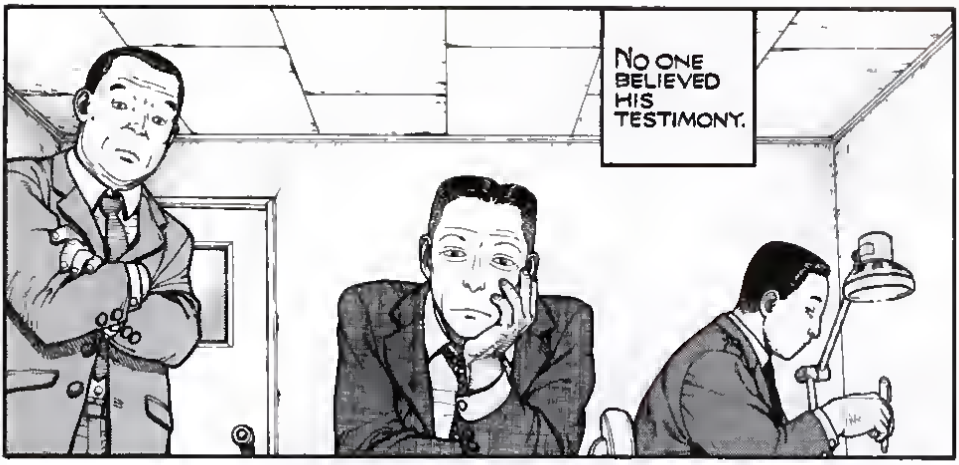

THE WRECKAGE WAS CLEANED AWAY, A NEW BRIDGE WAS BUILT, AND WHILE LAWYERS BICKERED OVER COMPENSATION...
...THE FORMER SITE OF THE APARTMENT BLOCK BECAME A PARKING LOT.

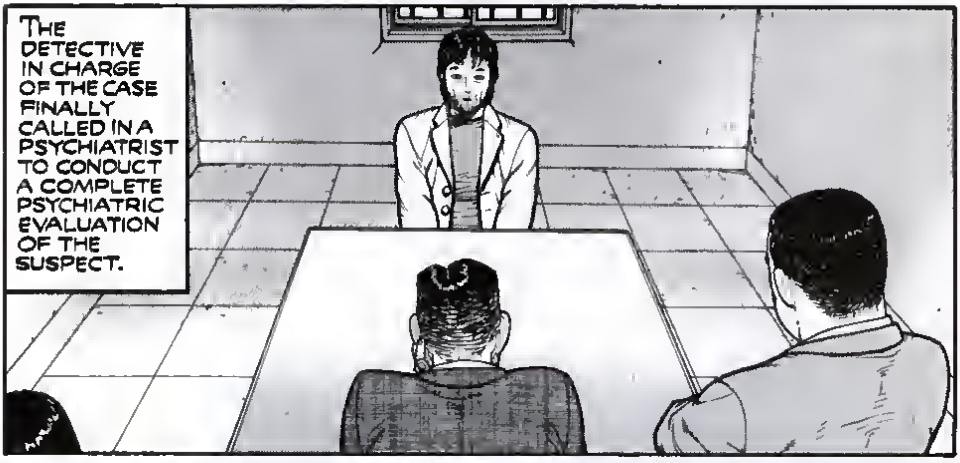

AND THEN, TEN MONTHS LATER... KUNIHIKO MACHIDA TURNED HIMSELF IN.

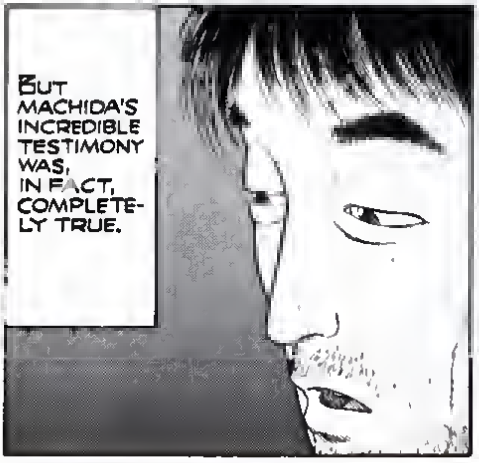
MACHIDA TOLD POLICE WHERE TO FIND THE MISSING HOUSE-WIFE, CHIAKI YAMAMOTO.
FOLLOWING MACHIDA'S INSTRUC-TIONS, POLICE LOCATED YAMAMOTO AND TOOK HER INTO PROTECTIVE CUSTODY. SHE WAS UNHARMED.


YAMAMOTO WAS FOUND IN A SMALL CABIN IN THE TANZAWA MOUNTAINS, SOME THIRTY MILES FROM WHERE SHE HAD BEEN REPORTED MISSING.
SHE HAD NO RECOLLECTION OF HOW SHE HAD GOTTEN THERE.


UNDER INTER-ROGATION, MACHIDA FINALLY BEGAN TO TELL THE POLICE ABOUT THE THIRD MISSING PERSON, DETECTIVE KIYOSHI WATANABE.


No one believed his testimony.

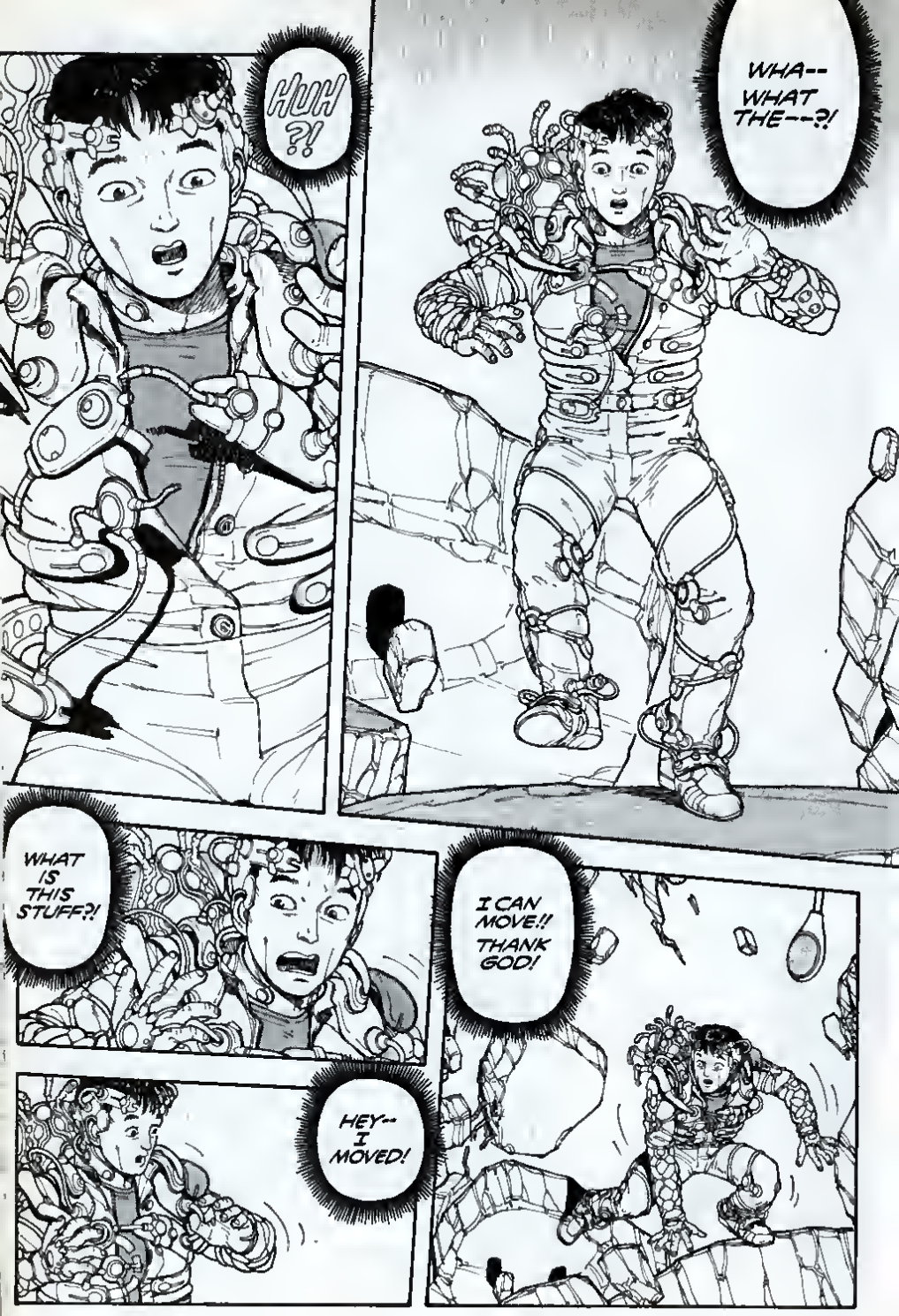

The detective in charge of the case finally called in a psychiatrist to conduct a complete psychiatric evaluation of the suspect.


But Machida's incredible testimony was, in fact, completely true.

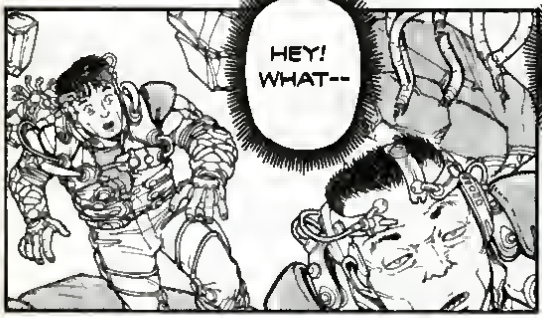
Time flows backward... to a moment ten months before...

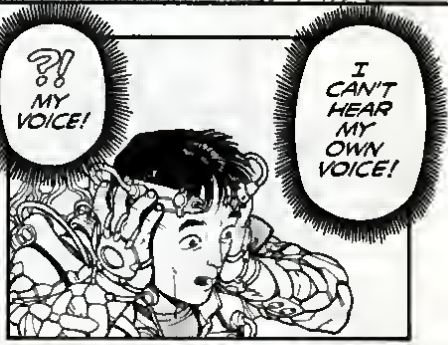
横断禁止

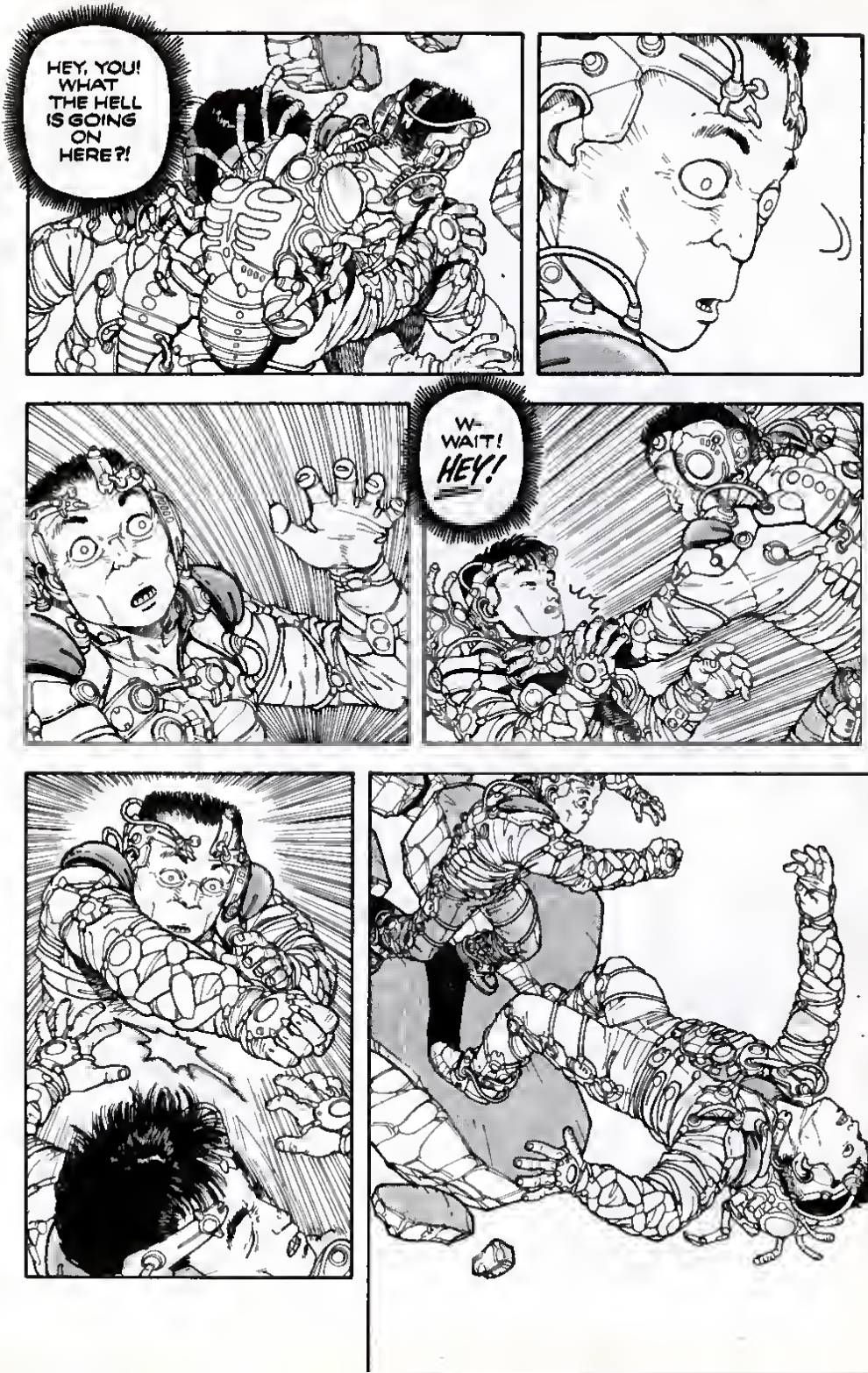
EVERY-
THING'S
STOPPED
?!
MY
BODY!
I...
I
CAN'T
MOVE!


HUH ?!
WHA-- WHAT THE--?!
WHAT IS THIS STUFF?!
I CAN MOVE!! THANK GOD!
HEY-- I MOVED!

WHAT THE HELL?! THAT LADY'S BURNING!
WHAT THE HELL IS GOING ON HERE?!
IT'S THAT DAMN DETEC-TIVE...

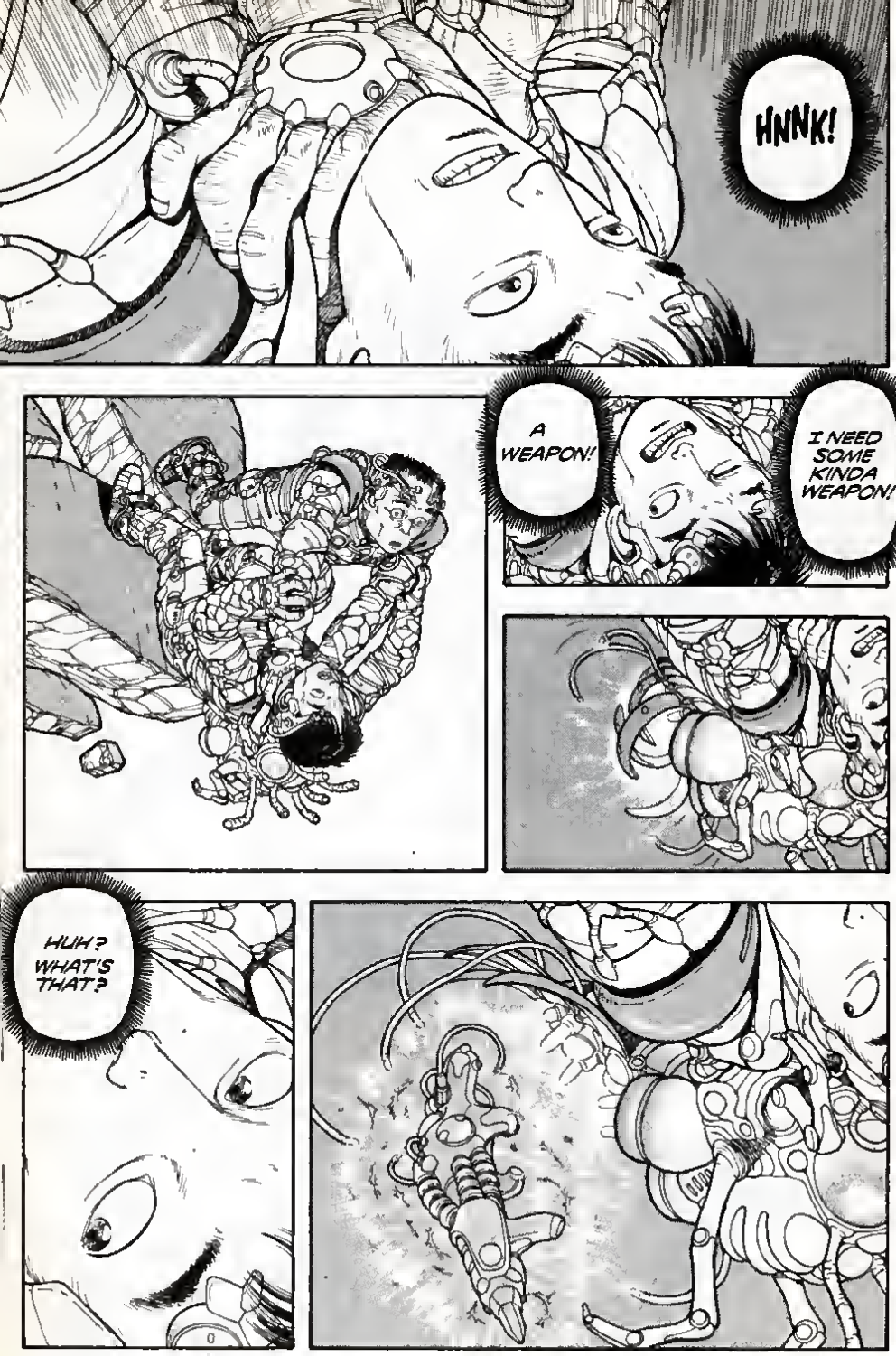

HEY! WHAT--

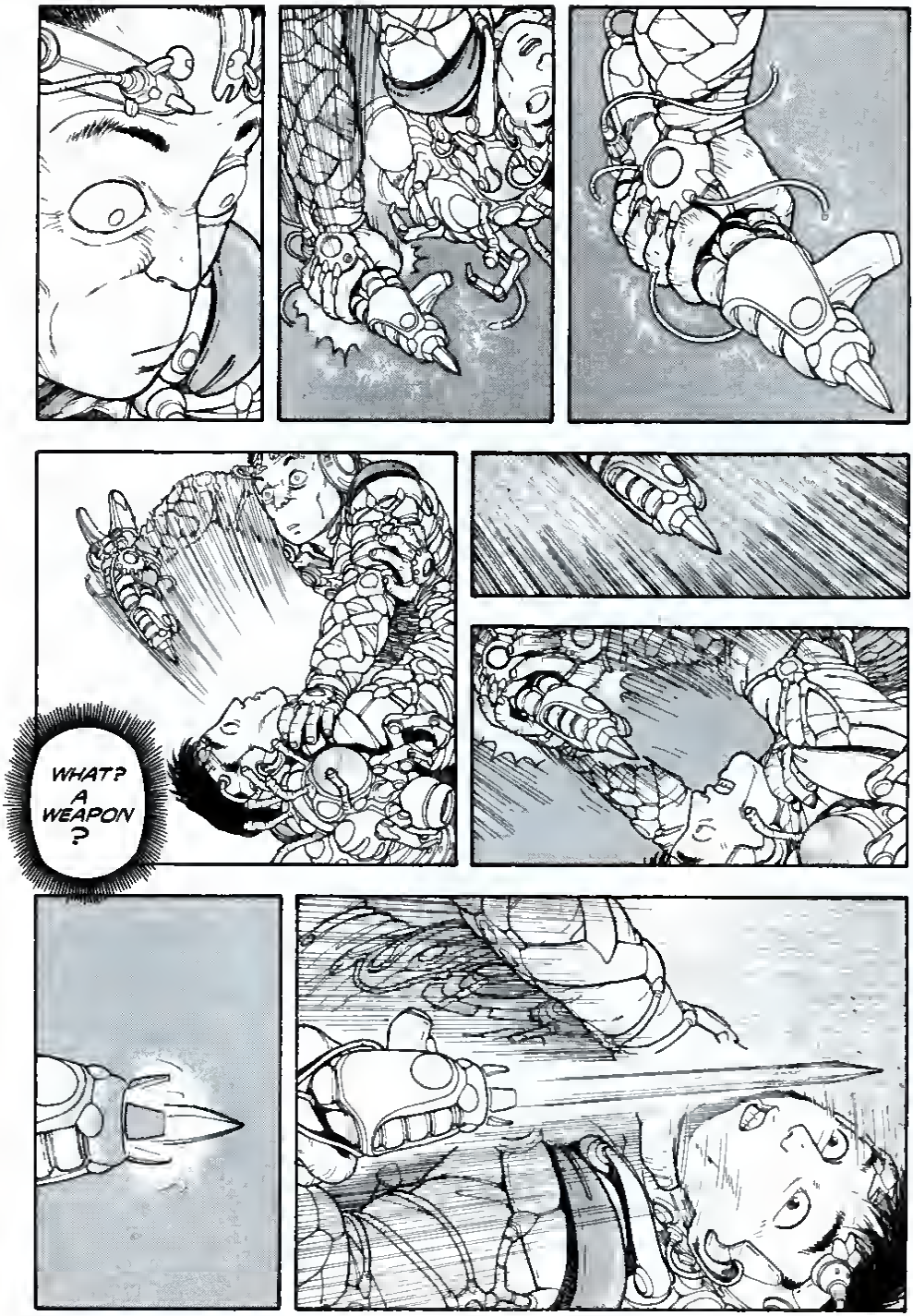

?!
MY VOICE!
I CAN'T HEAR MY OWN VOICE!


HEY, YOU! WHAT THE HELL IS GOING ON HERE?!
W-WAIT! HEY!

HUH?!
I'M NOT FALLING!
?!

HUH?!
I'M NOT FALLING!

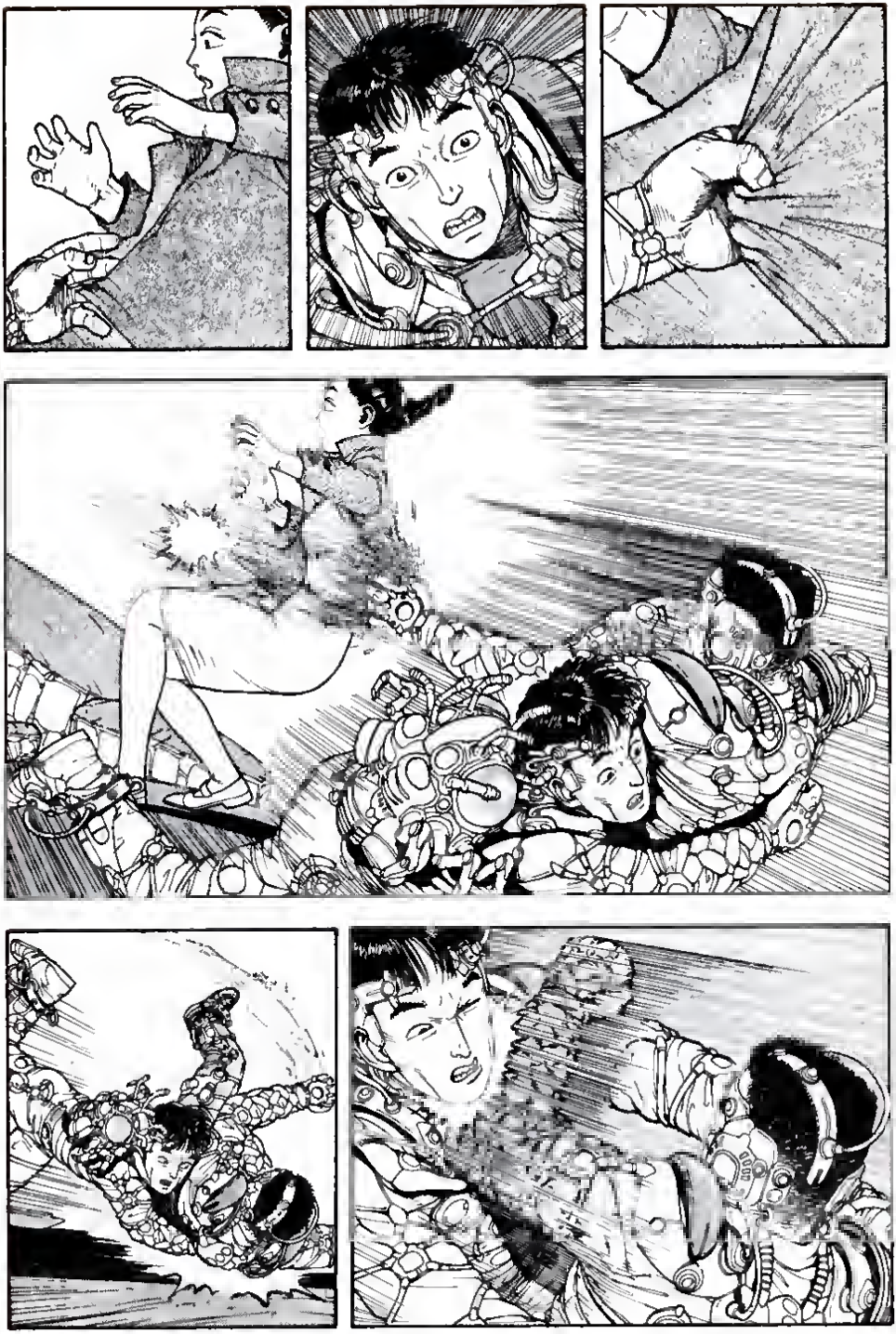

HNNK!
A WEAPON!
I NEED SOME KINDA WEAPON!
HUH? WHAT'S THAT?

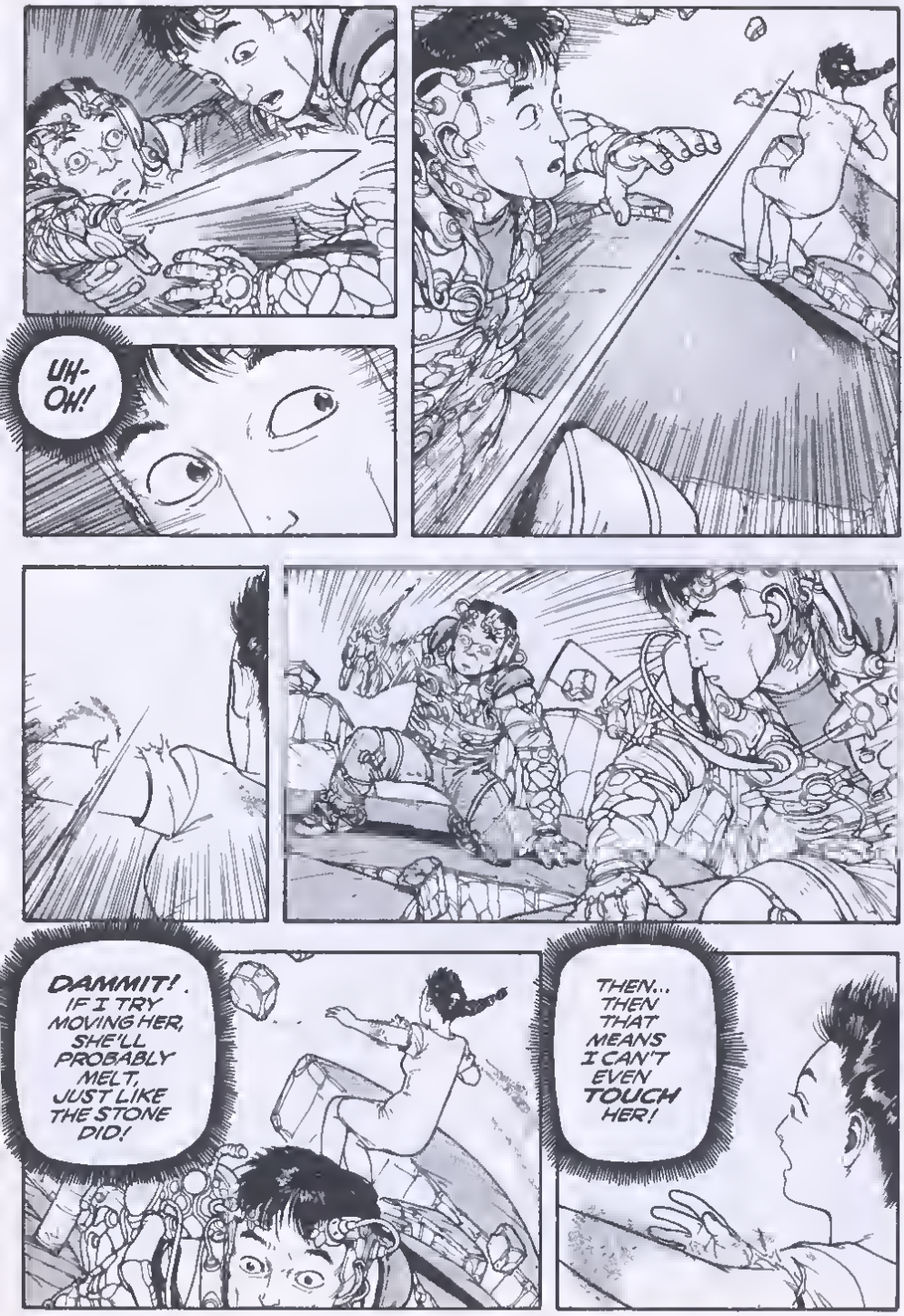

WHAT? A WEAPON ?

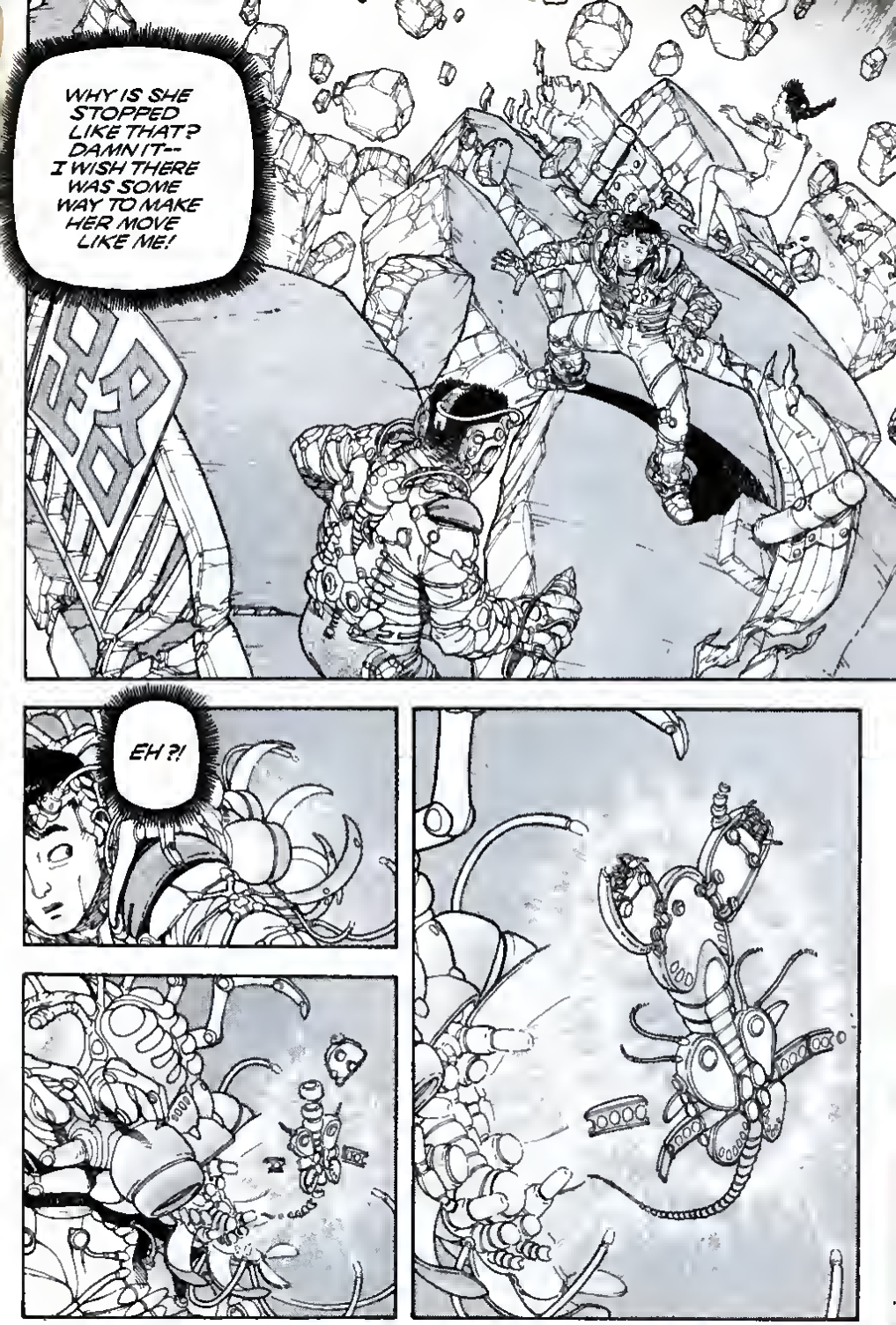
WHAT IS THAT THING?
OHH

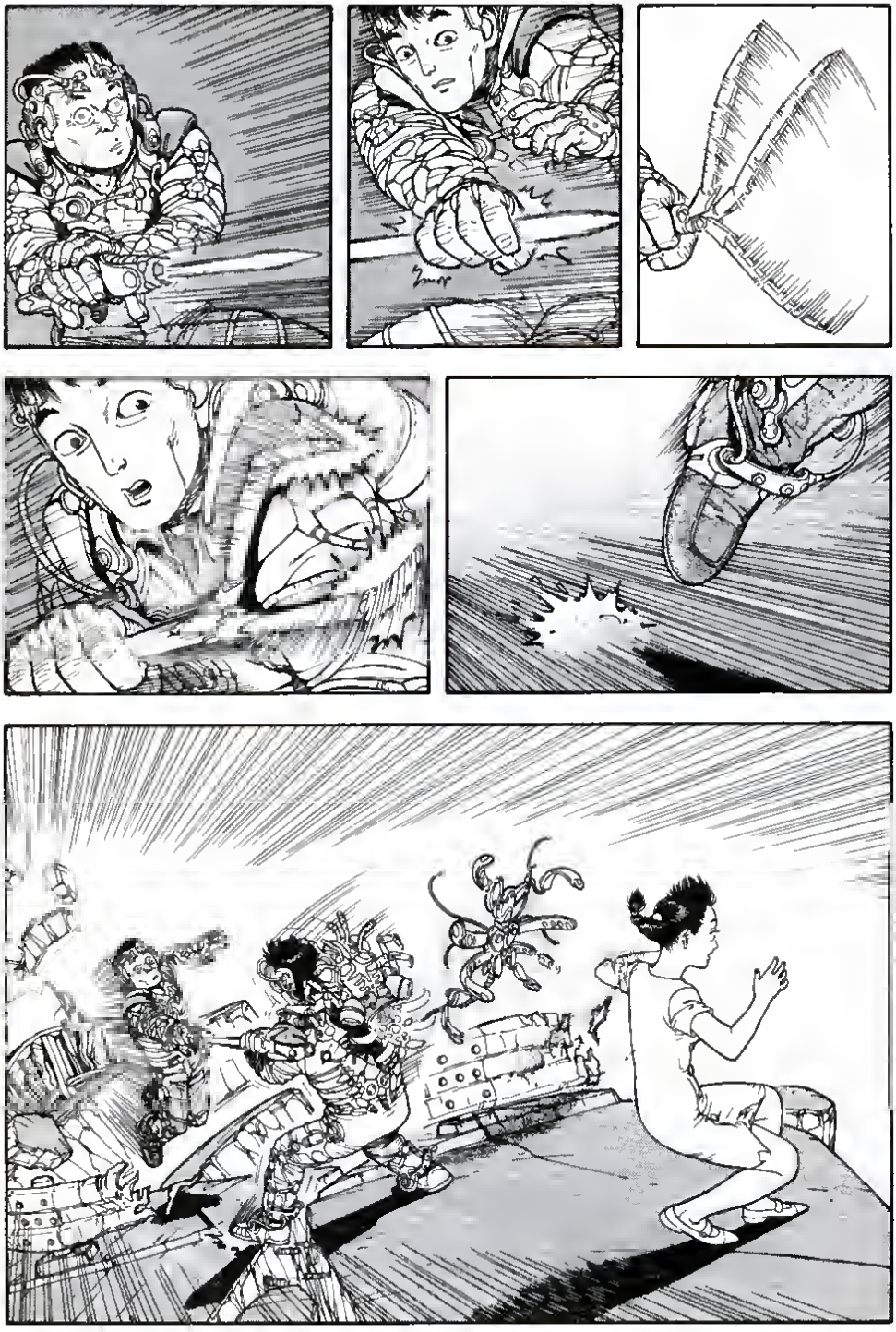
HEY!
HE'S GONNA DO SOME-THING TO HER!

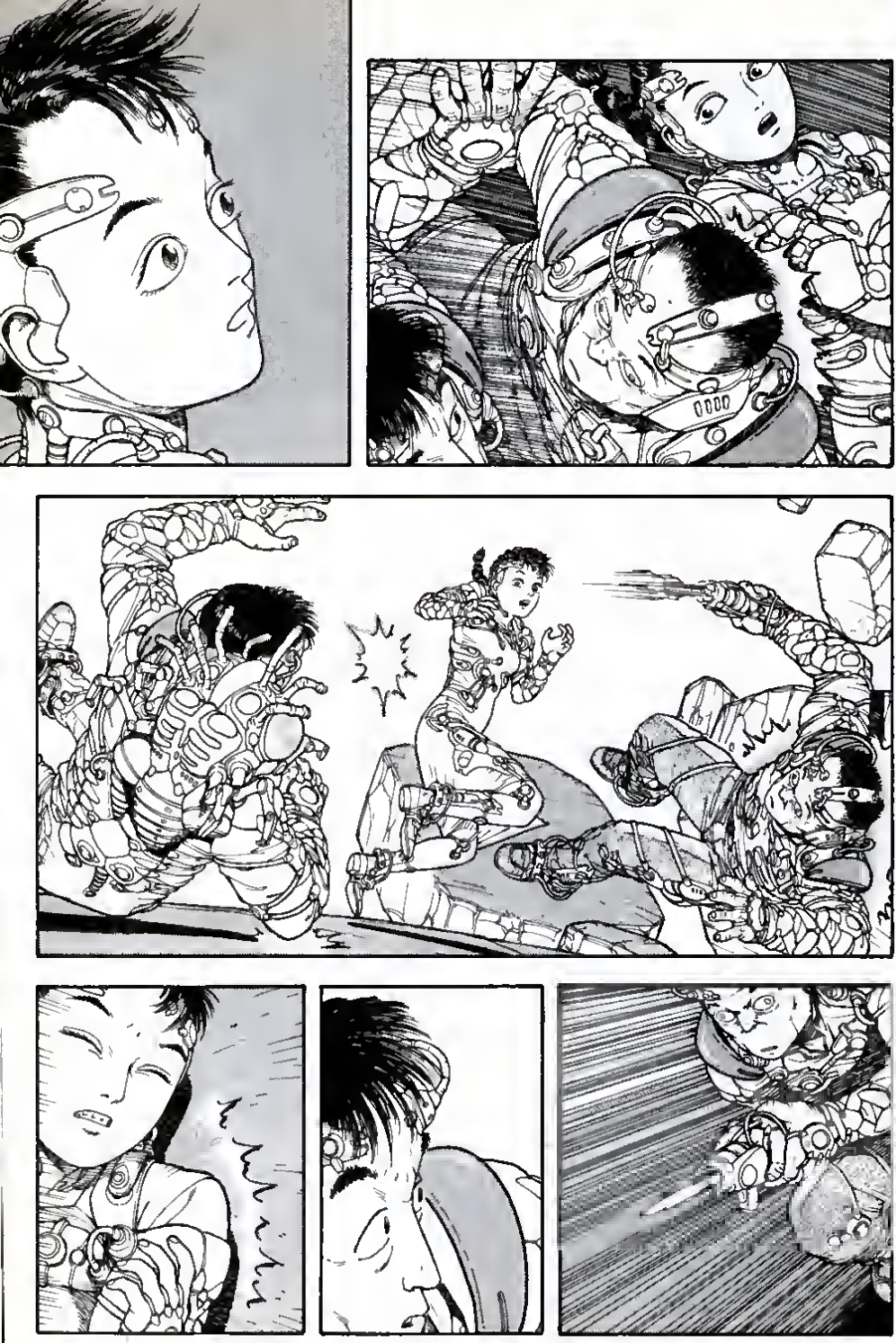
HUH ?!
IT'S GONE...?!
IT'S LIKE IT MELTED OR SOMETHING!
OH, MAN! SOMEONE HELP ME! WHAT SHOULD I DO?!

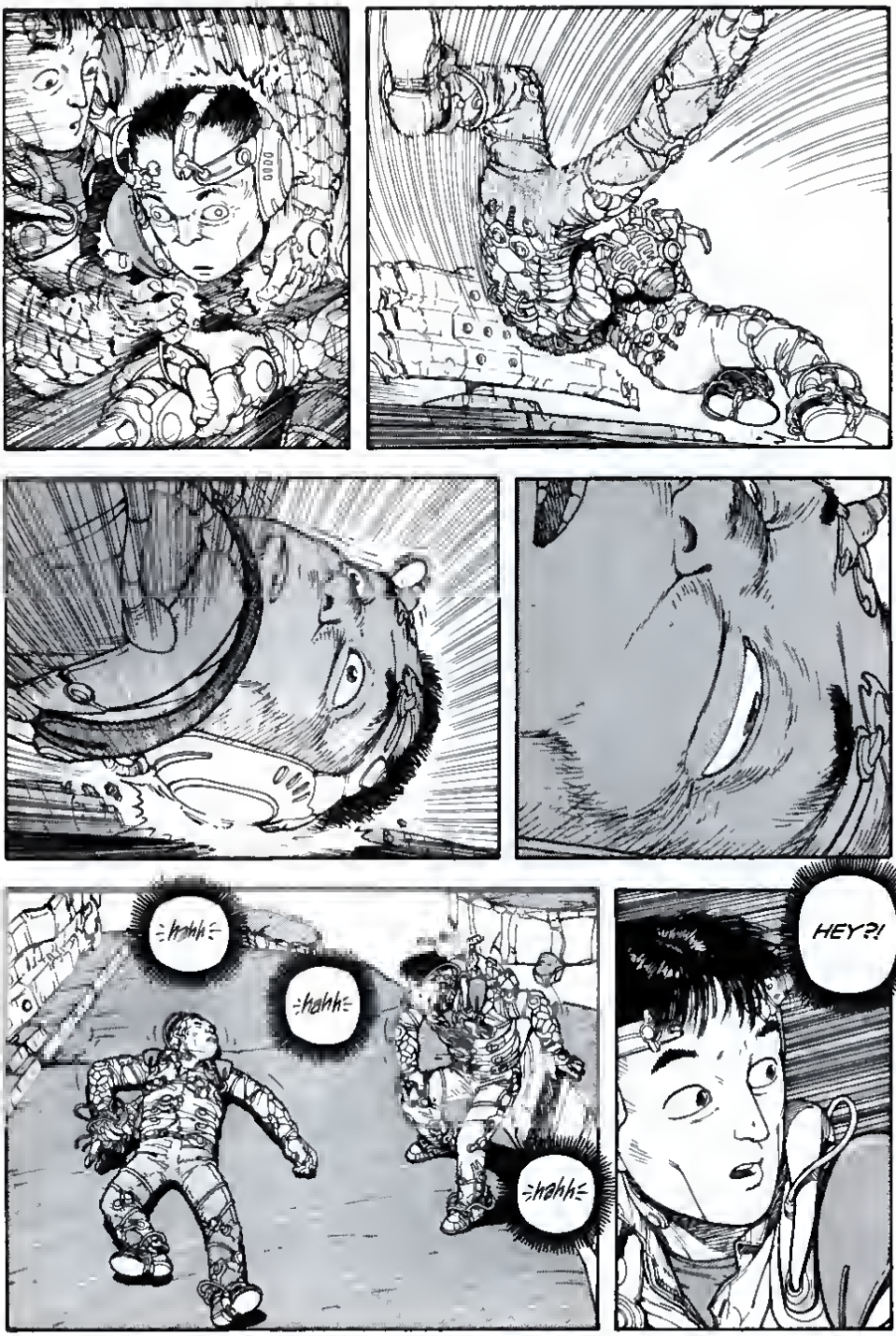



UH-OH!
DAMMIT! IF I TRY MOVING HER, SHE'LL PROBABLY MELT, JUST LIKE THE STONE DID!
THEN... THEN THAT MEANS I CAN'T EVEN TOUCH HER!


WHY IS SHE STOPPED LIKE THAT? DAMN IT-- I WISH THERE WAS SOME WAY TO MAKE HER MOVE LIKE ME!
EH?!

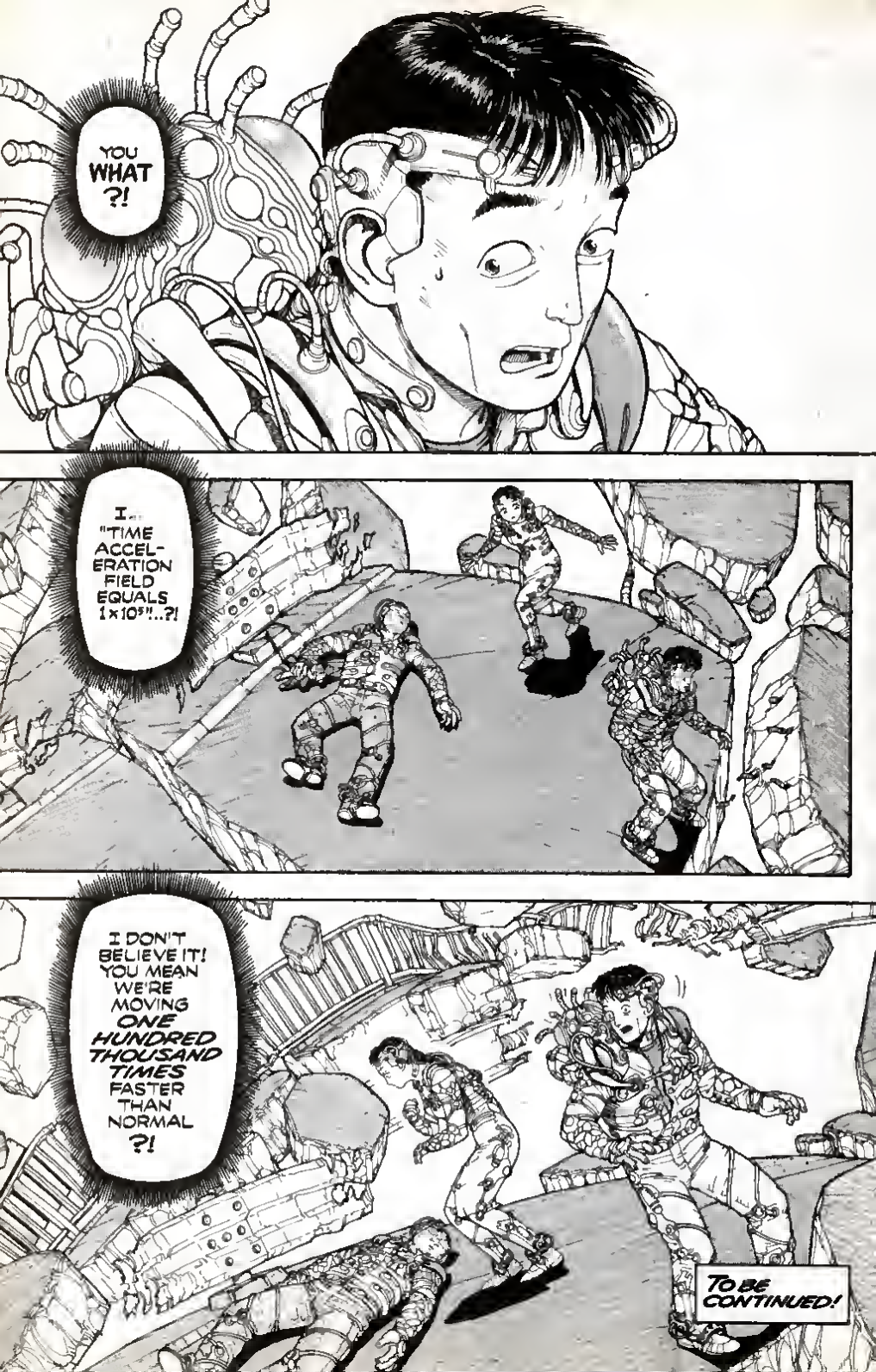





:hahh:
:hahh:
:hahh:
HEY?!

HEY! ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?! DID HE HURT YOU?!
EH?! WHAT?!
OH, THAT'S RIGHT. YOU CAN'T HEAR ME.
WAIT A SECOND... ALL THAT STUFF ON HER... DID IT APPEAR JUST BECAUSE I WISHED FOR IT?
ANALYSIS COMPLETE.
HUH ?!
EACH ENTITY APPEARS TO BE RUN BY INDEPENDENT LOGIC CIRCUITS. HIGH-BANDWIDTH NETWORK INTERFACE NEGATIVE.
NOW ATTEMPTING CONTACT WITH SECOND ENTITY.
WHO ARE YOU?!

ARE YOU PROCESSING MY DATA?
WH-WHO ARE YOU? WHERE ARE YOU?!
IT APPEARS YOU USE GAS FLOW PAST MEMBRANES IN YOUR THROAT TO GENERATE MODULATED PRESSURE WAVES. I CONCLUDE YOU USE THESE WAVES AS A COMMUNICATION AGENT.
I AM ATTEMPTING TO INJECT CODED DATA SIGNALS DIRECTLY INTO THE SOUND PROCESSING CENTER IN YOUR BRAIN, ALLOWING YOU TO PERCEIVE MY INPUTS AS SIMULATED "VOICE" DATA.
WHAT THE HELL?!
IS THIS AN ACCEPTABLE COMMUNICATION INTERFACE?
WHO ARE YOU?! WHERE ARE YOU HIDING?!
I AM UNIT OHZUN. I AM LOCATED ON YOUR BACK.
?!
I HAVE IMPLANTED CIRCUIT TERMINALS IN YOUR BODY FOR INFORMATION SIGNAL EXCHANGE.


YOU WHAT ?!
I... "TIME ACCEL-ERATION FIELD EQUALS 1×10^5"...?!
I DON'T BELIEVE IT! YOU MEAN WE'RE MOVING ONE HUNDRED THOUSAND TIMES FASTER THAN NORMAL ?!
TO BE CONTINUED!